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A SKETCH
OF
THE LITHUANIAN NATION

BY
J. GABRYS



PARIS
IMPRIMERIE DE LA COUR D'APPEL
L. MARETHEUX, Directeur
1, RUE CASSETTE, 1

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the eighteen century three Powers have united their force to crush Lithuania and Poland. However the conquerors do not content themselves with the possession of the soil; they tread over the most sacred rights. They impose a new religion on the conquered, they tear their code of law to pieces, they even proscribe the language of their ancestors. After having suppressed the frontiers, they endeavour to blot out all that distinguishes the subdued nations in order to hasten their assimilation.

We do not intend to preach up revolt. The destiny of nations is into the hand of God : the hour of justice will strike one day... The aim of this sketch is to recall their noble origin to the Lithuanians, especially to those who were compelled to flee from the soil of the Fatherland and to seek freedom in far distant lands. They out not to forget the songs which lulled them to sleep in childhood, they must keep as a sacred patrimony the language which they lisped in their mother's lap. Let them open their heart to hope and think that, thanks to the endeavours of their brothers, their rights will be recognized one day and that they will at last enjoy peace and freedom in their native land.

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A SKETCH

OF

THE LITHUANIAN NATION

Remnant of a once Powerful Nation.

The Lithuanians (Lietuviai), about three millions in number, are at the present time under four governmental districts: Vilna, Kovna, Grodna and Souvalki, West Russia, and are also in a few districts in Eastern Prussia. There are about one million emigrants in the United States of America.

The Lettons (Latvian), of whom there are about two millions, who lived in Courland and Livonia in Russia, belong to the Lithuanians, considered from an ethnological standpoint.

The Lithuanians, together with their brothers, the Lettons and the Prussians, formerly inhabited the entire Baltic Coast, between the Vistula and the Duna Rivers. They have even given its name to the Baltic Sea. (*Baltas*, in Lithuanian, signifies *white*). They advanced very far into the interior, as is shown by a great number of Lithuanian names. In the course of the thirteenth century, only the Lithuanians remained independent. After a bloody resistance, the Prussians were subdued by the Teutonic Knights; the survivors, being completely assimilated to their conquerors, lost every vestige of their nationality. In the beginning of the seventeenth century no trace is any longer to be found of the ancient Prussians. From that time the Teutonic Order, having been secularized, assumed the name of "Prussia".

The Lettons, subdued by those “Sword-Bearers”, were able, however, to preserve their manners and their language.

The Lithuanian race was then more numerous than now. At the end of the fourteenth century, there were more than five millions of them, who were baptized.

The decrease of the Lithuanians is explained by their denationalisation for the benefit of the Slavonians (Poles and Russians) and the Germans. The national revival, which took place in Lithuania at the end of the nineteenth century, spread out to a considerable extent and prevented the Lithuanians from being assimilated with their neighbours any longer, and from that time on, their number has increased more and more.

The Lithuanian nation was long classed among the nations of the Slavonic race. But this classification is more than inaccurate. Anthropology proves that the Lithuanians do not belong to the Slavonic family. On this matter we have unimpeachable linguistic proofs.

The Lithuanians, together with their brothers, the Lettons, constitute a nation, a race apart, which, according to Elisée Reclus, (“*La Géographie Universelle*”) is “composed of men who are very intelligent, full of fancy and poetry”. Kant, in his preface to the Lithuanian Grammar of Milke in 1800, says that they are fair dealing men, full of the consciousness of their personal dignity.

Anthropological Type of the Lithuanians and the Lettons.

The anthropological observations made in the various localities of Lithuania by such eminent anthropologists as Messrs Brennsohn (Dorpat 1883), Woeber (Dorpat 1883), T. Talko-Hryniewicz (Cracow 1893), establish the physical characteristics of that race. They are of middle size; but high stature, 1,69 meter is more common than low stature in those parts where the race has best preserved its primitive type from Slavonic influence; also the skin is whiter where the race is purer. The hair is fair, in the proportion of about 74 % among the Lettons, 80 % among the Lithuanians, and more than 87 % among the Samogitians. Blue eyes predominate in about the same proportion.

Individuals of the purely blond type, viz., those with flaxen hair and blue eyes, represent about 60 % of the Lithuanian popu-

lation; 63,8 % of the Lettons, and 71,3 of the Samogitians. The dark ones are in a small minority.

From their complexion the great majority of the various populations belong to a mixed type: the Lettons to the extent of 76 %, the Lithuanians 72 % and the Samogitians 25 %. Among these latter, the purely blond type represents more than one-third (33,8 %) of the inhabitants. Among the Lithuanians the fair type is only one-fourth, and one-fifth among the Lettons.

The face is generally long and the nose straight, especially among the Lithuanians (32,3 %).

From the shape of the skull, the Lithuanians are more brachycephalous (72 %), than dolichocephalous. Such is the anthropological type of the Lithuanians, which is distinct from that of the Slavonians and Germans.

The Lithuanian Language and its Importance to Philology and History.

The Lithuanian language belongs to the Indo-European group, and it is the nearest idiom to Sanscrit. It contains a large number of words much less remote from the Indo-European radical than the Slavonic, Latin or Germanic tongues. This resemblance is so great that the Lithuanian peasants understand Sanscrit sentences written by learned men.

The Lithuanian language is more ancient than the Greek, Latin, Celtic, German and Slavonic tongues. It has as much likeness to Latin and Greek as to Sanscrit. We have entire sentences with the same meaning, with a striking phonetic resemblance, for example :

Virai, traukite, jungan (Lithuanian);

Viri, trahite jugum (Latin);

meaning, "Men drag the yoke".

Dzievs (Dievs) davė dantis, duos duonos (Lithuanian);

Dzeus doē odontas dosei sitos (Greek);

that is, "God has given teeth, he will give bread".

It is undeniable that Lithuanian is the most ancient of all the living languages, and as such, is of invaluable service to philology

These qualities were already recognized by the great German philosopher, Kant, who, being born in Prussian Lithuania, had an opportunity to acquire a knowledge of it. He said, in his Preface to the Lithuanian Grammar, that this language is of very great importance to philology and to the history of the emigration of nations.

This opinion of the great philosopher was confirmed scientifically by a great philologist, Schleicher, who showed, by his philological work on the Lithuanian language, its great value to philology.

In addition to its great scientific importance, the Lithuanian language is remarkable for its great beauty. “Of all European languages”, said Elisée Reclus (*Géographie Universelle*), “Lithuanian, which is lacking in augmentatives, is the one which has the greatest number of endearing and caressing diminutives. It has more of them than Spanish or Italian, and even more than Russian, and they can be multiplied almost ad infinitum by applying them to verbs and adverbs, as well as to adjectives and substantives”.

He adds : “If the value of a nation in the whole of humanity were to be measured by the beauty of its language, the Lithuanians should rank first among the inhabitants of Europe. “Such is the opinion of the great French geographer on the Lithuanian language.

Lithuanian Literature.

At the time when Lithuania was a great State it had no writers, but *bourtininkas*, national bards, who chanted the traditional songs and poems. The persecutions of the Catholic clergy caused the *bourtininkas* to disappear; they ceased to exist, as a class, and with them the epic songs. Those songs are still mentioned by an analyst of the sixteenth century. But the memory of the Lithuanians failed to retain these heroic poems, which are unfortunately lost to us. They sing no song of war; they only mourn for their dead. In this respect they stand apart among the European nations.

This kind of popular poetry is called *rauda*, that is *dirges*, or funeral plaints. The *raudos* are the most important kind of popular Lithuanian literature.

The other kind of Lithuanian poetry, and that most prized by the people, is the *daina*. It is lyric singing, with a musical accompaniment, a melody composed chiefly of Phrygian, Myxolidian and Hypodorian scales, in various rhythms. These songs show the mild and tender disposition of the Lithuanians, together with their very simple conception of life, their resignation in grief, and their devotion to patriarchal customs.

In fact, the *dainos* show the innermost soul of the Lithuanians. They are very refined and delicate observers, slightly ironical sometimes, tender and melancholy, and deeply sensitive to the influences of Nature. They are distinguished from other continental races by the delicate reserve and the modest way in which they mention love in their popular songs; during thirteen years of research among the Lithuanians, the philologist Rhesa did not find in the love songs of this race a single verse which was not chaste and pure. The feelings of the Lithuanians are deeply rooted in their nature, but they never express them publicly by a daring word.

The diminutives of tenderness give a peculiar character to the “*dainos*”, but these poems are also full of words and forms that express grief and sorrow.

There are several very ancient “*dainos*” which are very important from a mythological standpoint, in which there are very rare examples of prehistoric philosophy. For example, we find strophes telling of the marriage of the Moon (*Menuo*, masculine gender), with the sun (*Saulé*, feminine gender), of the Love of the Moon for Aurora (*Auszriné*), and of the wrath of the Thunder (*Perkunas*), who cleaves the Moon with a sword, and says: “Why dost thou part from the sun to love Aurora?” We see here a mythological and really poetical explanation of the decrease of the moon’s disk.

The ancient mythological “*Dainos*” which we still find in the memory of the people are only fragments of grand epic poems. These fragments, full of charm and matchless poetry give us some slight idea of what those poems were.

The Lithuanians have never ceased to enrich their poetic treasure, by composing new “*dainos*” for every circumstance of their lives. In fact, they may be counted by the thousands, and the collections of several volumes are far from being complete.

Popular Lithuanian poetry is an inexhaustible source of poetical inspiration, and not only has the great Polish-Lithuanian

poet Mickevicz borrowed from that source, but also the German poets Gœthe and Herder, who showed the great value of the “dainos”. Popular Lithuanian poetry is so rich and varied, that it is impossible to enumerate its various kinds, in this memorandum.

If popular Lithuanian poetry is of the richest kind, literature, properly so called, is still in embryo.

Religious literature first sprang up in Prussian Lithuania, during the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and rapidly increased, through the Lithuanian works and letters, written by the Jesuits.

The oldest Lithuanian book dates from 1547; it is a catechism translated from German. Until the eighteenth century there were only translations of the Bible, of prayers and of liturgical books into Lithuanian. In the eighteenth century the monumental work of Duonelaitis appeared (1714-1780), “Metas” (*The Four Seasons*); it is a national epic poem. That poem, written in hexameter verses, is of easy and elegant versification, and presents a vivid and accurate picture of Lithuanian manners and customs in the eighteenth century.

If the great Polish-Lithuanian A. Mickewicz wrote in Polish, his contemporaries, Poszka, A. Daukantas and Bishop Valanczevskis, made use of Lithuanian in their writings. They are the three great precursors of the national revival in Lithuania. The first has written a great number of original poems and translations, the second is the author of several literary and historical works of great importance, the principal being : “Lietuvos Istorija” (*History of Lithuania*), and “Budas Lietuviu Kalnenu ir Zemaitiu” (*Character of Lithuanian Highlanders*). Valanczevskis, Bishop of Samogitia, has written several literary works, the most remarkable of which is “Zemaitiu Vyskupyste” (*History of the Introduction of Christianity into Samogitia from 1414 to the nineteenth century*).

Lithuanian literature was progressing considerably during the first part of the nineteenth century, when its natural expansion was suddenly stopped by the interference of the Russian Government, which violently deprived the Lithuanian nation of the means of improving its literature.

By a decree of 1864, the government of Russia forbade the use of Latin type in Lithuanian literature, and ordered it replaced by Russian characters.

In spite of that oppressive condition, the Lithuanian Literature

did not cease to be, it went on, extending and developing itself. The Lithuanian printing presses, absolutely proscribed in Russia, found a shelter in Prussian Lithuania. In Tilsit were printed the numerous Lithuanian papers and books, which were privately imported into Russian Lithuania. And what is more, the Lithuanian immigrants have created in the United States of America publishing centres where the Lithuanian books are printed and sent in the same way to Lithuania.

In fact, during the period of prohibition (1864-1904) Lithuanian Literature has been enlarged of many works of poetry, dramas, and novels, interesting for the people.

Let us enumerate among the most remarkable poets of that epoch, Maironis who has written several lyric poems and some other poetry, a remarkable fragment of which is entitled *Tarp skausmu i garbe* (Towards the Stars): Sekupasaka (Vaiczaitis) poet with a prompt imagination who was the laureate of the people. He composed a great number of very beautiful poems which were published in several editions. Unhappily, he died very young without having had time to develop and produce the best of his poetic talent. Monsignor Baranovski, Bishop of Seinai, eminent poet, wrote many lyric poems. Several of them have become so popular that they are sung in all parts of Lithuania. His poem, *Anykszcziu Szilelis* (Anykszcziu wood) is a perfect masterpiece in heroic national Lithuanian poetry.

The eminent publicist V. Kudirka occupies a preeminent place in the modern Lithuanian literature. Tale writer, novelist and distinguished poet, he adapted to Lithuanian literature, several works famous in both German and English literature : *Joan of Arc* and *William Tell* of Shiller and *Kaine* of Biron. V. Kudirka had a short (10 years) but very beautiful career, and what is more, he was obliged to fight against the prohibition of Lithuanian printing. His most celebrated work is *Tevynes Varpai* (The Bells of Fatherland) which pictures very adequately the revival of Lithuania. It is interesting to note that he is the author of the Lithuanian Hymn : *Lietuva tevyne musu* (Lithuania our country).

In spite of circumstances being unfavourable to them, the number of Lithuanian writers did not cease to increase. Among the contemporaries, the first place belongs incontestably to the great dramatic poet Vidunas. His muse is genial. His most

beautiful piece is a trilogy *Probotsziu Szeszeliai* (The Shadows of Ancestors) which possesses a force and a beauty only to be compared to those of Shakespear. I am confident that we shall still witness the production of some other master-pieces from the pen of that Lithuanian writer.

Jaksztas, poet and publicist, occupies a very important place in the literature of his country. He publishes a great many of his works in his own review *Draugija*. The young Lithuanian literature possesses several remarkable women writers. Let us name: Zemaite, Szatrijos, Rogana, Lazdynu, Peleda, Bite-Petkevicz. This last writer is a great novelist. It is to be understood that in this brief account, we cannot name all the writers who illustrate Lithuanian Letters. Lithuanian Literature is still in its cradle compared to other literatures; but it is neither poor nor unpolished as its enemies assert. Unfortunately it cannot take the flight for which it is adapted.

Lithuania's History.

Lithuania's history, which has not yet been told well or thoroughly investigaged, dates from the thirteenth century. At that time, the Lithuanians confined between the Slavonians and the Germans, and unable to rely upon natural frontiers in their struggles against their neighbours, being also between two civilizations, Oriental and Occidental, — Greek Christianity on one side and the Roman church on the other, — not only managed to keep their national existence and their national habits, but extended their dominions to the Black Sea.

Until the thirteenth century the Lithuanians lived in clans in their forests; they had a communal organisation. The necessity of defending themselves against the Germans (the Teutonic and Sword-Bearing Knights), their spirit of independence and their religion, compelled the Lithuanians, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, first, to gather around a small number of chiefs, and then they had a single head chief. At that time Rimgaudas (Ryngald), the first Grand-Duke of Lithuania, gained several victories over the Mongolians, and stopped their march toward Occidental Europe. He afterwards established his dominion over the Russians, who were weakened by the Mongolian

invasions. This sovereign of Lithuania extended the limits of his country as far as Polotsk and Vitebsk.

After him, Mindaugis tried by every means to accomplish Lithuanian unity. He had to fight against the Russians and the Poles, against the Sword Bearers and the Teutonic Knights. In order to resist these Knights he appealed to the Pope, and was baptized in 1252. However, as the German monks continued their hostilities, Mindaugis stirred up the Lithuanians, in 1260, to resist the Teutonic Knights, whom he defeated in 1261.

He was assassinated in 1263, before his work was finished, and Lithuania was drenched in blood in the revenge taken by the sons of Mindaugis on the murderers of their father; and so the country fell into anarchy, which lasted twenty years.

Vitenas, Mindaugis's successor, reestablished order. Gediminas (1315-1340), head of the Jagellons dynasty, was the real founder of Lithuanian power. He was very successful against the Russians, occupied Volynia and advanced as far as Kiev.

At that time Lithuania was at the height of her greatness, and had to be taken into consideration by the Western peoples as one of the obstacles opposed to the Mongolians who, after invading Western Europe, would surely have ruined European civilisation in its very cradle.

It is owing to the Lithuanians, historically speaking, that that disaster did not occur.

Realising that Lithuania could no longer stand alone, Gediminas formed alliances with the various peoples in Western Europe, ruled the country in an orderly manner, drew into it foreign artisans and artists, and opened up negotiations with the Hansa Towns.

He even began arrangements with the Pope to establish Christianity for ever in Lithuania, but the Germans (Teutonic Knights and Sword-Bearers, succeeded, by their plots, in preventing this from being done. Dominican and Franciscan friars were allowed, however, to preach in Lithuania and to build churches.

After a period of trouble following upon the death of Gediminas, two of his sons, Algirdas (1345-1377), and Keistutis, ruled together. Their reign was marked by wars against the Teutonic Knights, the Poles, the Tartars, and the Muskovites. Algirdas, victorious over these latter, marched three times up to Moscow and invaded the Crimea. At his death, Lithuania had extended her dominions

from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and from the Bug to the sources of the Donetz. Keistutis was at the same time fighting the Germans, who wanted to conquer Lithuania, at any cost.

Jagello, the son of Algirdas, by his marriage with Hedwige, united Lithuania with Poland, and established the Christian religion once for all in Lithuania. But Jagello's marriage (in 1386), his conversion and that of the whole nation, which was baptized, officially, do not mark the end of Lithuanian nationality, as is asserted by several Polish historians. Jagello left the Grand Ducal throne to his cousin, Vytautas, whose father he had killed, that is, Keistutis, the hero of the wars against the Teutonic Knights. Vytautas did his best to secure and keep the independence of Lithuania, which, being three times as large as Poland, could never become a Polish province, as is claimed by some historians.

Indeed, the large principality of Lithuania, at the time of its union with Poland in 1386, included :

I. Lithuania properly so called, viz. : the basin of the Niemen and that of its tributary, the Vilija (Neris), with Vilna as the metropolis ;

II. Samogitia (Zemaitija) ;

III. White Russia, viz. : the ancient Russian principalities of Polotsk and Vitebsk ;

IV. Black Russia, with the towns of Kiev, the old Russian metropolis, and the towns of Chernigov, and Perejaslav ;

V. Volynia and Podolia, with Brest-Litovsk, Lusk and Cherson.

Lithuania was then the largest European State of that time : From the forest of Samogitia to the Southern steppes, it spread from one sea to the other. Unfortunately, that State had no national unity. The Lithuanians, properly so called, were less numerous than the Russians. They had no unity in religion ; a part of Lithuania, in the centre and in the North, was still heathen, Catholicism predominated in the West, and the East and South East were Greek Orthodox.

Such an ill-assorted State, founded on conquests only, could not last.

The natural course of its history was interrupted by Jagello's marriage. After embracing Catholicism, he endeavoured to make

Lithuania a Catholic country. The new direction continued even when Jagello, being forced to choose between two crowns, had to leave Lithuania to his cousin Vytautas, who undertook with the Poles, his allies, that great campaign against the Teutonic Order, which ended in a complete victory at Grunvald (1410).

Lithuania won Samogitia's freedom, this country being there dependent upon the Teutonic Knights.

Vytautas would have liked to make the large principality a realm equal to Poland in dignity, free from all Polish interference, but the jealousy of the Poles prevented him from carrying out this task. After Vytautas's death (1430), his successors secured Lithuania's independence, that country having been united until the second part of the sixteenth century, by a mere dynastic tie. At that time one could foresee in Poland the early extinction of Jagello's dynasty — that is, the disappearance of the only political tie that united the two countries. From these events the « Political Union » at Lublin in 1569 resented.

The nobility of both countries agreed that both should be united under the same head, Poland and Lithuania to keep their respective laws, armies and grand dignitaries, each country its own Marshall, Chancellor and hetmen. By special agreement the greater part of the provinces of Southern Russia which had been previously annexed to Lithuania, were to be united with Poland. The government of these two united States was like the dualism of Austria-Hungary. Though Lithuania kept its independence, the « Union of Lublin » opened wide the doors of Lithuania to the Poles, and from that time, the « Polonisation » of the country was inevitable. The court at Vilna was already under the influence of the Poles at the time of the last princes.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, some Lithuanian noblemen like Radzivill, Czartoryski, made themselves Poles. Fortunately the inferior classes remained faithful to their national traditions. The peasants and the Samogitian nobility were unaffected by polonisation.

The Polish-Lithuanian State became a kind of confederated kingdom without any central administration and whose joint executive was a king paralysed by diets, by government officers appointed for life, or by confederations organised in such or such provinces. That union did more evil than good to both states.

Anarchy which reigned in Poland, corrupted the Lithuanian nobility who thought of nothing but laying taxes on the people and weakening royalty. The peasants are oppressed by the noblemen, the orthodox complain about the catholics, certain magnates like Radzivill have an army of their own and are real potentates. There is no Third-Estate, the Jews who inhabit towns have no political rights. There is no regular army. The country is rent by the Orthodox, the Lutherans solicit the protection of Russia and Prussia. Lithuania tries repeatedly to separate herself from Poland (Janus Radzivill) but does not succeed. Anarchy is at its height under the reign of the Saxon August (1733-1763). At his death, the factions look towards Maria-Theresa and Catherine to ask for their mediation.

Then Russians, Prussians and Austrians came in, for Poland and Lithuania having no army were unable to resist invaders. Frederick was the first who attempted to dismember Poland and Lithuania, and was clever enough to decide Maria-Theresa and Catherine to join him. The first partition took place on the 25th of July 1772, the second in 1792, and the third in 1795. By these three successive breaking up, the greatest part of Lithuania was annexed to Russia, and a smaller part to Germany.

Since then, Lithuania has not been submitted to any more territorial modification. Politically destroyed, divided between the Russian governments of Vilna, Kowna, Grodna, Minsk, Mohilev, Vitebsk, her name has been erased from the map of Europe. And in 1840 an ukase forbade the official use of the name of Lithuania which was to be replaced by the insignificant geographical one of North Eastern Country.

The era of martyrdom begins for the Lithuanian nation : the russification is more and more intense. The chief facts of it were : the removal of Vilna University to Kiev, the persecution directed first against the uniates and afterwards against the catholics, the suppression of the Lithuanian Statute and its substitution by the Russian Code, the bloody repression of the insurrections in 1831 and 1863, the exile of many Lithuanian properties and the confiscation of their estates.

These violent measures have altogether caused less evil to the Lithuanian nation than the prohibition of using any more in Lithuanian literature the Latin type which had been adopted as a result of the Western civilisation in the sixteenth century,

Instead of the proscribed characters, the government imposed its Russian ones (*grajdanka*) so that it would be able, by that means, to exert over the Lithuanian people a greater influence.

But it was repulsed with dignity by the Lithuanians who preferred, rather than accept that *present of Danaos*, to content themselves during 40 years, with books printed in Prussian Lithuania and secretly imported from Germany.

It is impossible to estimate the moral loss caused to the Lithuanian nation by that woful prohibition. The whole of it was condemned, without the press, that indispensable instrument of national instruction, to vegetate during the second half of the nineteenth century (1864-1904).

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the Lithuanians deprived of the means of asserting their existence, were considered like a nation that was no more.

Not only these brutal ways did not kill the Lithuanian nation as was wanted by certain Russian statesmen (Mouravieff) but on the contrary, they awaked national conscience: in 1883 appeared at Tilsit, the patriotic Lithuanian journal *Auszra* (Aurora). It was founded by the great patriote J. Basanovitch and imported mysteriously in Russian Lithuania. The national propagandism in Lithuania spread more and more. *Auszra* (Aurora) was soon replaced by several other patriotic newspapers. *Varpas* (The Bell), *Ukininkas* (The Farmer) which were read in all Lithuania in spite of the greatest severity of russian authorities.

Thus, Lithuania, to preserve her literature in the original types, fought against Russia during 40 years.

The hundred thousands of the Lithuanian books printed in Latin characters at Tilsit and brought in contraband to Lithuania were confiscated by Russia and burnt. On the other hand, the thousands of books distributed by Russian authorities in Russian types bore the same fate, they were also burnt by the indignant people.

At last, this far from insignificant fight, ended in 1904 when Russia perceiving the wrongs done to Lithuania, revoked the former ukases and reestablished the use of the primitive Latin types.

That action had the greatest consequences : the Lithuanians acknowledged again by Russia as being a distinct nation, ceased to be, for their neighbours, "an ethnical matter"; national consciousness took a considerable extension with the help of the press.

But oppression went on under various shapes to exterminate the Lithuanian nation. It is impossible to retrace them, the people tried to save themselves from its rigour and they left, in great number, the country of their forefathers to secure liberty on the other side of the Ocean. In that manner, Lithuania, during the last part of the nineteenth century, gave to the United States of America, no less than one million of immigrants.

It is peculiar to notice that the Lithuanians do not lose their personality among Americans, they keep their nationality and numerous ties with the metropolis by printing newspapers and reviews and organising themselves.

The movement of freedom which took place in Russia in 1904-1906 found Lithuania ready for events. The nation, though remaining loyal, showed her vitality in convoking at Vilna, her Capital, on the 4th of December 1905, a national assembly, composed of several hundred delegates selected among the clergy and the Lithuanian nobility and coming from all parts of the country. It was decided that Lithuania could no longer content herself with her actual lot, but wanted a national autonomy that would permit her to develop freely.

The political events which followed prevented the realisation of that decision, but the next stage of national evolution has been traced by the nation itself.

The mere fact of the convocation of a national assembly by a nation which was considered dead by all her neighbours, proves her complete awakening and her existence. Actually, Lithuania, in creating Societies, in publishing a great number of newspapers and books, gains every day upon the time lost in fetters and works to occupy, among the nations of humanity, the place to which her past entitles her.

Though the situation has become more advantageous for them, the Lithuanian people are still very far from that state of prosperity which is the lot of other nations. For Lithuania being situated in the centre of Europe, has been yet unable to acquire even those rights which are granted to the remotest colonies of the occidental nations.

Lithuania under the domination of Russia.

POLITICAL SITUATION. — In our modern conception of the great states, we often forget that if the sword's brutal strength and superiority in number are sufficient to conquer a territory and set up a flag, the assimilation of one people to another is an extremely difficult, if not impossible, deed. The frontiers of a country can be easily obliterated; its name blotted out of the map of the world; but never can be moved away from its heart, the love of the soil and the fidelity to its institutions. Lithuania, dismembered and divided, has kept intact, in spite of persecutions, her tongue, her literature, her history, in one word, what makes her glory and distinguishes her from neighbouring nations. She desires to assert her rights to the safety of that sacred patrimony which she wishes to perpetuate in her race. She knows that peoples like individuals have a role to fulfil in humanity and she is bent, with all her strength towards the accomplishment of her destiny. That task is most difficult to realize as Lithuania, incorporated to Russia and Germany, cannot possess any national unity. Every manifestation of life from that people is severely repressed. In these conditions it becomes impossible to her to keep her own individuality. I will not criticize here, the measures undertaken by Russia and Germany to assimilate Lithuania. I shall content myself with indicating the principal lines of a series of reforms which will bestow honour to the victors and secure a little freedom to a loyal nation whose only grievance is that she wants to live of her own life.

“Ruling gives dissatisfaction” says the French proverb; but oppressing makes one vile. To the contrary, generosity honours strength. From the deep differences which exist between the Lithuanian, the Slave and the German, it is quite evident that the Lithuanian nation will always be stopped in her development as long as she has no law to suit her wants. Laws suitable to one people, are prejudicial to others. Some great nations have perfectly understood this. The autonomy given by England to her possessions is a fine example for the countries whose desire is to win the affection of the peoples who take shelter under the folds of their flag. Autonomy is necessary to Lithuania for the normal development of her three fold physical, intellectual and

moral nature. It will give her a greater consciousness of her dignity, will add to her loyalty and will favour the production of all the works worthy of an intelligent nation. Unfortunately, Lithuania is far from being autonome! She has not even self-government. The Czar, Alexander II, had elaborated a large scheme of government (*zemstvos*) which remained unachieved. Recently the actual government has prepared another scheme of reforms for the provinces of old Lithuania. That project has only the appearance of self-government and will share the fate reserved to all half-measures; it will not ameliorate the situation of the Lithuanian nation, to whom is not even reserved a minimum of participation in national decisions.

The Lithuanians are kept away from public functions in their own country, where all functionaries from the Governor to policemen are Russians, strangers to its language and habits.

The Lithuanian tongue is prohibited in all the public establishments in Lithuania. It is easy to imagine what disorder, such an administration brings into the life of the inhabitants.

JUSTICE. — In Lithuania, the judicial system is one of the most deficient. The courts are very badly organised, the proceedings complicated. The spirit of Russian law is quite distinct from that of the Lithuanian law and though the Lithuanian statute is suppressed, it still rules the customs not only of the Lithuanians but also of the inhabitants of White Russia and Little Russia who were, a long time ago, under the Lithuanian domination. It is obvious that that Statute of which certain articles are obsolete, could not satisfy the necessities of modern life; it would be necessary however, to elaborate on the same basis a civil code for the use of Lithuania. That is what was already proposed by the great Russian legist Speranski.

The penal legislation and criminal code ought to be identical in the whole empire without any aggravating exception for Lithuania. We pass in silence the numerous defects of Russian jurisdiction which we cannot enumerate here. It is useless to add that the Lithuanian language must not be excluded as it is actually, from jurisprudence in Lithuania.

INTELLECTUAL SITUATION. — The intellectual situation of the Lithuanian nation is not bright. If we consider that the reading

If the books written in Lithuanian was rigorously forbidden until 1904, we shall be most surprised to hear of the existence of a very great number of literary people in Lithuania. That result is due to the Catholic clergy and specially to Bishop Valanczevski who have taught the people in Lithuanian in defiance of the government interdiction.

The intellectual level has been raised since the revocation, in 1904, of the Ukase suppressing the use of Latin types and, above all, when the law of 1905 permitted the introduction, during the first two years, of the Lithuanian language in schools where the teaching was exclusively made in Russian. Though the primary teaching takes place in certain schools, partly in Lithuanian, the secondary teaching is exclusively in Russian. Schools are not numerous. Not only teaching is not made compulsory but private initiative is difficult. It is a complicated thing to obtain the authorisation of teaching. Since the removal of Vilna University to Kiev, the Lithuanians are deprived not only of a University, but of all superior schools. Teaching in Lithuania is in a deplorable state. Let us hope that the reform of public teaching, intended by the Douma, will accord to the Lithuanian people compulsory primary teaching in their mother tongue. It would also be desirable that the government, not only would not render private initiative difficult, but would help it to create secondary and professional schools in the language of the country. All Lithuania and specially the inhabitants of Vilna have been asking, for a long time, of the central Government, the reconstitution of their University.

We hope that that desire which has received the approbation of the local authorities will soon be realised, for the want of a University makes itself strongly felt.

There is no teaching for adults in Lithuania. A few societies like « Saule », « Ziburys » and « Blaivybi » are trying to fill up that gap, in organising lectures for the people. One can hardly understand the obstacles put by the local authorities in the way of good will of private initiative. Thus, the government did break up in 1908, two important societies « Szviesza » and « Auszra » who were delivering for the people, lectures throughout the country, founding libraries, distributing books, giving theatrical performances in the villages. Would it not be better for the Russian government to build rather than to destroy?

ECONOMICAL SITUATION. — Lithuania is preeminently agricultural; but the countrymen have not enough land. There is in Russia a peasant bank, subsidized by the State, whose aim is to assist the peasant to purchase of land. That bank has even several branches in Lithuania; but it does not trouble about the wants of the rural Lithuanian population. On the contrary, it does prejudice to the interests of the local population by buying out the land which it throngs with Russian colonists called for the purpose from the interior of the Empire. That imperial bank, at the same time it transgresses its byelaws, commits a heavy fault, for it introduces in a country where the population is already dense (58 inhabitants per square kilometer) colonists coming from countries less populous (34-36 inhabitants per square kil). It is evident that in this case, the economical interests of Lithuania are dependent upon the Russian politics of the Central government whom, addressed to that effect in the Douma by the Lithuanian Deputy Bulat, could not justify the behaviour of the Peasant Bank in Lithuania.

It is not astonishing if the Lithuanian peasants, not finding in the government the protection necessary for their economical wants, emigrate in numbers to America. It is obvious that a situation so strange wrongs considerably the country and the State itself of whom Lithuania forms a part.

The imperial government will perhaps notice it and will then take a satisfactory decision.

INDUSTRY. — In Lithuania, industry is still in an embryo state. However, few countries are so favorable to industry. Wood, water, and other raw materials are in abundance. But, until now, the State has not cared to develop industry there. Ought it not to create a bank with the view of enlarging commerce and industry in that rich part of its possessions? Such is actually the situation of Lithuania under the Russian domination. It is, as one can judge, not as bright as one could desire.

If we remember the amical connections which Lithuania, at the time of her independence entertained with the Russian nation, if we point out that the Lithuanian nation is one of the most faithful and has never given a pretext for oppression; if we recall to mind the services that Lithuania has rendered to the Russian nation when she protected them for centuries against the invasion

of the Germans who, in their march towards the East (Drang nach Osten) tried to break into the Oriental Europe, when she freed the White and the Little Russia from the domination of the Tartars and when she granted the Russians a complete autonomy in the Lithuanian State, we shall understand that the exterminating policy of the Russian government is quite unjustified ; because it is useless to try assimilating a nation so conscious of herself as is Lithuania. That error committed by some Russian Statesmen should be atoned as soon as possible. Russia herself would gain by inaugurating in Lithuania a more lawful, more rational and more amicable policy. It must be borne in mind that Lithuania, though a subject, is still Russia's sentinel in the west.

Lithuania under German Domination.

We must add a few words about the state of that part of the Lithuanian nation placed under the domination of Germany. The Lithuanians, less numerous in Germany than in Russia, were always protected by the kings of Prussia. Their language and their customs were not only respected, but effectively favoured. At Königsberg University a chair was created of Lithuanian language and literature. A scholarship prize was even allotted to Lithuanians too poor to educate themselves.

Prussian Lithuania did not enjoy a complete autonomy but she had privileges which permitted her to develop freely her national individuality.

But time alters, Prussia who was a long time ago, a little "mark" for the Germans who were the most advanced in the East, and whose population was composed of dissimilar elements — ancient Prussians (Parusiai) Slavs and Teutonic Knights — became, at first a Kingdom, then a vast Empire, and to make the thing more peculiar, the more Prussia enlarged her power, the more she was aggressive. She went on her way and, at the end, oppressed the nations, non German, which composed the state. Bismarck and his successors inaugurated the policy of exterminating the Lithuanian race in Germany. From then, the political and intellectual situation of the Lithuanian people in Prussia was more and more compromised.

In Germany, as in Russia, the Lithuanian language is excluded

not only from the schools where the use of it is severely forbidden even as the vehicle of explanation to children, but it is expelled more and more even from Protestant Churches where it is replaced by German. It is not allowed in public places. The local authorities of the Tilsit and Memel districts which are peopled with Lithuanians, do their best to germanize as completely as possible the Lithuanian population. No means is omitted generally to obtain that result.

Germany ought to keep in memory the opinion emitted 110 years ago by the great Philosopher Kant: "Lithuania having a loyal character, deserves the protection of the State. She must be preserved, for her tongue possesses the key which opens all the enigmas not only of philology but also of history".